

CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A building block comprising:

a plurality of straw stalks having natural occurring binding agents processed to form a generally rectangular block for building, the entire block being substantially formed of straw stalks,

wherein the block includes a first rigid wall, a second rigid wall opposite of the first rigid wall, and one or more sidewalls connecting the first and second walls, the first and second walls having a higher density of straw stalks than an interior portion of the block being formed of straw stalks.

Claim 2 (Original): The building block of claim 1, wherein the straw stalks are rice straw stalks and the block is substantially free of any added binding agent.

Claim 3 (Original): The building block of claim 1, wherein the straw stalks have a predetermined moisture content of approximately 14% or less.

Claim 4 (Original): The building block of claim 2, wherein the first and second walls are generally planar.

Claim 5 (Original): The building block of claim 4, wherein the sidewalls are generally planar and orthogonal to the first and second walls to form crisp edges.

Claim 6 (Original): The building block of claim 1, further comprising a restraining device adapted to provide additional support to the first and second walls.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The building block of claim 1, further comprising an added binder in contact with the straw stalks~~and~~.

Claim 8 (Original): The building block of claim 7, further comprising a moisture inhibitor in contact with the straw stalks.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The building block of claim 5, wherein the block comprising dimensions including a length of about 24 inches, a width of about 12 inches and a height of about 12 inches and weighs between about 40 to 55 lbs.

Claim 10 (Original): The building block of claim 9, wherein the block further includes one or more through-holes extending between the one or more sidewalls and adapted to receive an elongated member therethrough.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): A building block comprising:
a plurality of rice straw stalks compressed to form a generally rectangular block for building having a moisture content less than or equal to about 14%, the entire block being substantially formed of straw stalks,

a binder inherently derived from the straw stalks wherein upon application of heat and pressure and cooling thereafter the block maintains its shape and includes a first rigid smooth planar wall, a second rigid smooth planar wall opposite of the first rigid planar wall, and planar sidewalls connecting the first and second walls to form acute edges, wherein the first and second planar walls include a thickness less than a thickness of the block; and

a restraining device adapted to provide additional support to the first and second walls.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): The building ~~block~~ block of claim 11, wherein the block ~~comprising~~ weighs between about 40 to 55 lbs. and includes dimensions comprising a length of about 24 inches, a width of about 12 inches and a height of about 12 inches.

Claim 13 (Original): The building block of claim 12, wherein the block includes one or more through-holes extending between the one or more sidewalls adapted to receive a rebar, grout tube or both.

Claim 14 (Original): The building block of claim 13, further comprising a binder and a moisture inhibitor in contact with the stalks.

Claims 15 through 20 (Canceled)

Claim 21 (New): A building block comprising:

a plurality of straw stalks compressed together to form a block, the block including a first wall and a second wall opposite the first wall, the block further including two oppositely located side walls joining the first and second walls and a top and a bottom wall joining both the two side walls and the first and second walls, the block further defined by:

wherein at least the first and second walls define rigid planar smooth walls, and

wherein the block defines one or more through-holes extending through the block between the top and bottom walls; and

a binding agent mixed with the plurality of straw stalks to bind together the plurality of straw stalks.

Claim 22 (New): The building block of claim 21, wherein the side walls define rigid planar smooth walls.

Claim 23 (New): The building block of claim 22, wherein all of the walls forming the block include rigid planar smooth walls.

Claim 24 (New): The building block of claim 23, wherein the one or more through-holes extending through the block defines cylindrical rigid planar smooth walls.

Claim 25 (New): The building block of claim 24, wherein the straw stalks located in a center portion of the block comprises a rigid material.

Claim 26 (New): The building block of claim 25, wherein substantially the entire block is rigidly formed of straw stalks.